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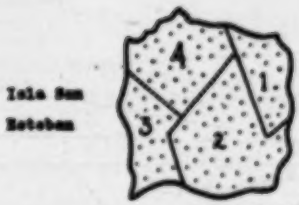

FIG. 5. Subdivisions of Band VI

BAND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

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The social structure of the bands can be properly understood only in relation to the social structure of their smaller units, the i?iziitang. The kin group which resided in and dominated each such subdivision constituted a clan.[5] This group conforms to Murdock's three major specifications for clan designation.[6]

Murdock's first specification states that a kin group, to constitute a clan, must be based explicitly on a unilinear rule of descent. The kin group of each Seri band subdivision was based on patrilineal descent. An individual was closely associated with the group of kinsmen of his subdivision, all of whom were related to him through males only. The father was the head of his household. For example, he assumed leadership in marriage negotiations. Upon his death, the eldest son took his place.

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The second specification states that such a kin group must have residential unity. Seri marriages were exogamous with respect to the subdivision,[7] and the rule of residence was patrilocal. The domicile was set up near the home of the groom's parents.

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the vessel to Guaymas. With the aid of a group of Yaqui, some of these women were said to have been permitted to go to Hermosillo and eventually to return to their home on Tiburon. Others of their group are said to have remained near Guaymas. The women who returned to Tiburon reported that the San Esteban women and children were put aboard another ship which sailed southward.

BANDS I, III, AND IV

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As opposition from the Papago and government forces increased, the members of Band I were forced to seek refuge on Tiburon Island. The mainland members of Band III (subdivisions 11 and 12) were also forced, especially during the Encinas Wars, to flee to Tiburon. There the combined forces of Bands I, III, and IV sought to cope with the military expeditions sent out through the years to exterminate them. Tiburon Island is an adverse battlefield for the uninitiated; some expeditions were turned back due to lack of potable water or because of failure to make contact with the enemy in the mountainous terrain. Some expeditions did encounter the Seri, however, and many natives were either killed or captured.

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Through the years, then, these military encounters, along with smallpox and measles epidemics, were responsible for reducing the Seri tribe to a small remnant. The band and clan systems lost their functional relevance as the people continued to live together for mutual protection. Shortly after the turn of the century, the expeditions and raids had practically ceased.

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SIGNIFICANCE OF BANDS TODAY

With the dissolution of the band system, the rule of descent shifted from patrilineal to bilateral, and the rule of residence shifted from patrilocal to neolocal.

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[583]
Although the substance of the band system is no longer a reality, the concept of land ownership still remains. A young Seri of today may choose to be associated with either the i?iziiting of his father or that of his mother. He is said to inherit part ownership of the area. It is recalled by one informant that in former times ownership of a mountain was especially important. Sometimes ownership of a mountain was included as part payment for a bride. Thus a person might 'own' a mountain in a subdivision other than his own.

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A custom exists even today whereby a person names his dog after a mountain or other geographical point located in his subdivision. Although the person may re-use the name, each dog so named must be of the same sex as the first.